

PROCUREMENT POLICES AND REGULATIONS TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

May 7, 2015 – 4:00 p.m.

5th Floor Council Conference Room, Council Office Building

Members Present

Tom Creamer
Wayne Cobb
Eppie Hankins
Buddy Henley
Linda Moore
David Robbins, Chair

Members Absent

Daniel Parra

County Staff Present:

Linda Price, County Council
Mary Anne Paradise, County Council
Richard Melnick, Office of the County Attorney

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. with a quorum of members present. The minutes of the April 23, 2015, meeting were unanimously approved by all Task Force members present.

II. Task Force Worksession

- In preparation for this meeting Chair Robbins asked Task Force members to:
 - a) Review the minutes of past task force meetings and come up with three ideas for potential findings/recommendations for our report; and
 - b) Identify three interest groups/people/communities from which we should solicit input as we begin to search beyond the county government for input?
 - c) Members offered their issues of concern regarding the County's procurement process, which included the following:
 - Perception issue that the procurement system is broken
 - System needs to be streamlined, because additional staffing is unlikely
 - Process should be electronic and less paper-based
 - The procurement process takes too long, need to increase resources or streamline the process, possibly by raising the dollar thresholds
 - Compliance programs are hurting for small businesses, ie. Liquidated damages
 - Number of non-competitive contracts and waivers
 - Companies are not required to submit an MFD plan
 - Too many types of contracts; consolidate the number
 - Monitoring and compliance of contracts
 - No review of solicitations; cost barriers to participation
 - Clear objectives are needed
 - Training for departments regarding procurement processes
 - Large amount of informal contracts and p-card purchases; better tracking is needed as the process is not transparent
 - Needs IT automation improvement and increased use of online vehicles

- Mr. Melnick clarified that with the creation of the Office of Procurement, it is no longer part of the Department of General Services (DGS) – DGS does not have the final signoff on procurement contracts. Risk Management determines the County’s level of exposure and insurance requirements. Faribi Kassiri is the Acting Director for the Office of Procurement. Ms. Price noted that there is Procurement Innovation Project underway; Mr. Creamer expressed the view that while top management may change, the lower level workers remain the same and significant change is unlikely.
- Ms. Hankins commented on barriers to entry, and suggested that the MFD Program Manager Alvin Boss attend the next session. She noted that Prince George’s County has implemented a new program, and suggested it may be beneficial to hear from them. Ms. Price said that she would be comparing MFD programs in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Memphis, and would share the information. She indicated that Grace Denno, who manages all compliance programs would attend the next meeting.
- Mr. Robbins suggested a short questionnaire be developed to gather information from contractors. Members suggested possible questions, subject to further wordsmithing. The best way to distribute the survey was discussed. Ms. Price said she would ask Grace Denno for her list of vendors, and would follow up with the Department of Economic Development. Agreed to be as broad as possible and to attempt to reach people unlikely to be listed in databases, through use of a press release and chambers of commerce.

The following questions were selected to be included in the procurement survey:

1. Are you a current Montgomery County contractor? Yes/No response
IF YES
2. How many solicitations did you participate in before obtaining a contract? Text box response
3. What is working with the county procurement process? Text box response
4. What is not working with the county procurement process? Text box response
Go to common questions
IF NO
5. Have you participated in any county procurement solicitations? Yes/No response
IF NO
6. Select each of the reasons that you feel have prevented you from participating in any county solicitations: (check box responses)

Process too complicated	No opportunities in service area
Lack of information	Bond/insurance requirements
Other_____	
7. Do you think your bid was handled fairly? Yes/No response
IF YES: Go to common questions
IF NO
8. How do you think the process was unfair? (Text box response or check boxes???)
9. How could the process be improved? Text box response

Common Questions (for all participants)

10. On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest) how relevant to the bid decision are (*reduced from scale of 10*):

Length of solicitation period	1	2	3	4	5
Insurance requirements	1	2	3	4	5
Time to obtain signed contract	1	2	3	4	5
Compliance Set-Aside requirements	1	2	3	4	5
Perception of fairness in process	1	2	3	4	5
Possible return on investment of solicitation	1	2	3	4	5

11. Resources are available to help me be competitive in the county bid process. Yes/No response

Demographic Questions (for all participants)

12. How many employees in your company? Text box response

13. Approximate annual sales? Text box response

14. Type of company (consulting, construction, sales, etc)? Text box response

15. Is your company location within Montgomery County? Yes/No response

16. In what other jurisdictions are you doing contract work? (check box responses)

Prince Georges County

Frederick County

Howard County

Baltimore County

State of Maryland

District of Columbia

Fairfax County

Loudoun County

Arlington County

State of Virginia

None

Other_____

- Ms. Price will determine if \$300 is available to conduct the survey via Survey Monkey, and how best to most broadly distribute the survey to local businesses.
- Additionally, Ms. Price will explore other contacts and avenues to best distribute the survey to a broad audience.
- Mr. Robbins will contact the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce to request that the Task Force survey be available at their event on Friday, May 15.
- Ms. Price will request written information of bond and insurance requirements from the Department of Finance, Risk Management Division to disseminate to Task Force members. If follow-up is needed, Ms. Price will request that a Division representative brief the Task Force.
- Mr. Creamer will send a written draft of the survey questions to Ms. Price.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.